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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/725,933	11/30/2000	Kyu Dong Kim	342310.0005	2877

7590 06/03/2004

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EXAMINER

IRSHADULLAH, M

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3623

DATE MAILED: 06/03/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/725,933

Applicant(s)

KIM ET AL.

Examiner

M. Irshadullah

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ME

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 17 March 2004.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-43 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☐ Claim(s) 1-43 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after allowance or after an Office action under *Ex Parte Quayle*, 25 USPQ 74, 453 O.G. 213 (Comm'r Pat. 1935). Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, prosecution in this application has been reopened pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on March 17, 2004 has been entered.

1a. This communication is in response to amendments filed March 17, 2004.

Summary Of Instant Office Action

2. Applicant's arguments regarding claims 1-43 rejected under 35 USC 103, Office Action mailed October 17, 2003 have been considered and are responded below.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

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4. Claims 1, 8-15, 25-33, 36-43 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Srinivasan (US Patent 5,548,506) in view of Tatham et al (US Patent 6,223,177 B1).

Srinivasan teaches:

Claim 1. A workflow management system for automating a business process (Abstract, lines 1-4, wherein "designing and implementation of Auto Multi-project Server System" providing "automation of tasks of project management coordination for work-group team members" clearly infers that the reference system provides "a process of performing and controlling (managing the flow or workflow of) tasks" to be performed by the team members (work-group) of an organization, and wherein "organizational" infers that reference is concerned with a process relating to a business organization as indicated by Fig. 3 {A: Resource name> Feet of copper pipes, Resource budget>2000 and Resource consumed>500, B: Resource name>Plumber man hours, Resource budget>10 and Resource consumed> etc., wherein citation of feet copper pipes, budget and resource consumed etc. pointing to that the project and steps thereof or workflow relating to a business dealing with installation of pipes. Moreover, it is noted that Srinivasan project system being generic, is for use by any entity including business), comprising:

a) a host computer that controls the system (Abstract, lines 5-6 and col. 2, lines 59-61);

c) a process designer that creates and models flows and properties of the business process (Srinivasan: Col. 7, lines 32-34, Fig. 2 {50} described col. 5, lines 53-

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54 recited with and Fig. 3, col. 5, lines 23-39, wherein a user would use "module 50" for creating "project plan comprising information on the project, tasks, dependencies and resources (col.7, lines 32-34)", thus functioning as "a process designer" and "designing (Abstract, line 1)", "compiling multi-project plans (Abstract, lines 10-11)" as well as "project or team leader's creating project plan" infer "modeling" and Fig. 3 depicts the claimed project plans' "flow and properties" (See Applicant's Spec., page 6, lines 10-13 and page 21, line 11 through page 23, line 12);

d) a database that compiles information on the administrative steps and the properties of the business process (Srinivasan: Fig. 1 {10}, col. 5, lines 23-25, Fig. 2 (60), col. 5, lines 62-63. Applicant will appreciate that cited databases would be used to store (compile) the application comprising steps to be used by the administrator (See discussion about administrator in 1b) below), also, user would use said databases to store (compile) above discussed "business process and properties");

e) a process engine that executes and handles the business process based on the information on the administrative steps and the flows and the properties of the business process (Srinivasan: Fig. 2 {20 working in co-operation with 10, 30, 40, 60, 70, 80, 100 and 110} described col. 5, line 53 through col. 6, line 18. Here, cited "auto project management server software (col. 4, lines 29-32 and Fig. 4, described col. 7, line 35 through col. 8, line 5) functions as "a process engine" as further supported by process steps or flowchart of Fig. 4, and see discussion about "administrator" below, and discussion about "business process" above); and

g) an application program that can be used for at least one of creating and executing the business process (Srinivasan: Col. 1, lines 33-35 read with col. 5, lines 8-15 and col. 7, line 1. Cited "software or application program" being used for above discussed business process employing cited "creating, col. 7, line 1" function).

In the following element:

b) an administrator that prepares for automating the business process;

Srinivasan teaches:

preparing the business process for automating (Col. 7, lines 13-25 and col. 1, lines 33-50, wherein "organization" would constitute "department", "work-team" infers "members and user groups", "authorization information" indicates "authorities" and "project leaders" infer "role" {See Applicant's spec., page 17. lines 11-13 read with line 19 (using the administrator: a software program or module for administrator's use) and Applicant's "people" is considered as administrator} and as discussed above, the reference automates tasks of project management coordination (Abstract, lines 2-3), as also the reference system is concerned with a process related to a business organization). Furthermore, Srinivasan teaches a variety of system users (Col. 3, lines 21-22, col. 6, line 64 through col. 7, line 3 and col. 7, line 28);

Srinivasan does not specifically teach:

an administrator.

However, Tatham et al teach the same (Fig. 3e, col. 7, lines 53-54, wherein citation of

"administrator accessing all aspects of the system via administration screen" indicating

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reference's teaching "an administrator"). While Srinivasan relates to a system which automates flow and control of procedures, information, applications etc. relating to a project for an organization and members thereof, Tatham et al provide a web-based system enabling collaborative functionality among a number or group of users.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the relevant art at the time of Applicant's invention to incorporate Tatham et al's feature into Srinivasan's invention, thereby entailing a system with enhanced functionality and extended utility.

In the element below, Srinivasan does not teach claimed feature:

f) a web client.

However, Tatham et al teach the same (Col. 3, lines 39-42). As discussed above, while Srinivasan relates to a system which automates flow and control of procedures, information, applications etc. relating to a project for an organization and members thereof, Tatham et al provide a web-based system enabling collaborative functionality among a number or group of users.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the relevant art at the time of instant invention to incorporate Tatham et al's feature into Srinivasan's invention, thereby employing the latest available technology and thus providing a system with enhanced functionality and extended utility.

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In the following claim:

Claim 8. The workflow management system of claim 1, wherein the web client further comprises:

- a) a worklist handler;
- b) a workitem handler; and
- c) a process monitor.

Srinivasan does not teach:

- a) a worklist handler;
- b) a workitem handler; and
- c) a process monitor.

However, Tatham et al teach the same a worklist handler, workitem handler (Fig. 2A (170) and Process monitor (Col. 5, lines 51-54, cited "monitor" is "Process monitor"), wherein user would use reference's "template" as worklist and workitem handlers. As discussed above, while Srinivasan relates to a system which automates flow and control of procedures, information, applications etc. relating to a project for an organization and members thereof, Tatham et al provide a web-based system including "templates" enabling collaborative functionality among a number or group of users.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the relevant art at the time of instant invention to incorporate Tatham et al's feature into Srinivasan's invention, thereby employing the latest available technology and thus providing a system with enhanced functionality and extended utility.

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Claim 9. The workflow management system of claim 8, wherein the worklist handler maintains a work list for a user (inherent, since it is the basic function of above discussed worklist handler).

Claim 10. The workflow management system of claim 9, wherein the workitem handler supports execution of the business process (Inherent, since it is the requisite functionality of above discussed workitem handler).

Claim 11. The workflow management system of claim 10, wherein the process monitor checks a status of the business process (Tatham et al: Col. 5, lines 51-54 recited with col. 1, lines 35-35 and motivation in Applicant's claim 8 above).

Claim 12. The workflow management system of claim 11, wherein the process monitor further checks a history of the business process and current progress of the business process (Tatham et al: Col. 5, lines 51-54, col. 7, lines 7-8 and col. 1, lines 34-35, wherein user would employ reference's "monitor" function or process for monitoring or checking cited "decision history or history" and cited "continuous reporting on status changes" or "current progress" and see motivation in Applicant's claim 8 above).

Claim 13. The workflow management system of claim 12, wherein the process monitor further monitors resource utilization (Tatham et al: Col. 5, lines 51-54.

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Reference's "monitoring" function would be used for claimed purpose and motivation in Applicant's claim 8 above).

Claim 14. The workflow management system of claim 2, wherein the organization manager further creates, deletes and maintains relationships between the departments, ranks of the members in the department and/or user group and information regarding the members in the department and/or user group (See discussion of claim 2a) above and Srinivasan's col. 7, lines 50-51 and col. 6, lines 64-67, wherein user would use reference's "ranking" function for ranking "project work team or members of user work group" and see motivation in Applicant's claim 8 above).

In the following claim:

Claim 15. The workflow management system of claim 14, wherein the organization manager further registers a signature of each member of the department and/or the user group.

Srinivasan teaches:

Organization manager, members of department or user group and registration (Col. 3, lines 21-22 and col. 1, lines 36-42, wherein "program or general manager-col. 3, lines 21-22" is "organization manager", cited "organization-col. 1, line 38" inferring "department" and "organizational work teams-col. 1, line 42" indicating "members of department or user groups" and "assigning unique identifier to projects-col. 3, lines 36-38" inferring "registering identities").

Both Srinivasan and Tatham et al do not teach:
signature.

However, signature taking or registering is a well known practice in any organization or department, because some kind of identity, security or authoritative insignia is an essential requisite in said organization or department. For instance, PTO took or registered Examiner's signature which are used for above stated purposes as and when needed.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the relevant art at the time of instant invention to incorporate above mentioned feature into the combination of Srinivasan and Tatham et al's invention for the reasons cited above.

Claim 24. The workflow management system of claim 1, wherein the process engine comprises:

a) an interface agent that can interchange with other process engines information on status of the business process (Srinivasan: Fig. 1 {User A, User B, User C} and abstract, lines 7-9);

b) a request manager that receives requests from a user, directs the process engine to handle the requests, and returns results to the user (Srinivasan: Fig. 1 {Users A, B, C communicating with 20 via 30}, wherein reference's "messaging" function infers availability of a program to facilitate users' requesting (request manager) the system for project data or information and other claimed purposes);

c) a dispatcher that retrieves and executes the requests and stores results in the database (Srinivasan: Fig. 1 {Users A, B, C communicating with 20 via 30} and bi-directional arrows clearly indicate availability of program (dispatcher) facilitating “retrieval” and “execution” of users’ request);

d) a scheduler (Tatham et al: Col. 7, lines 14-18 and see motivation in 1f) above);

e) a security manager that controls a certification process with an outside certification server (Srinivasan: Col. 3, lines 33-38, wherein citation of “security issues” infer system’s capability of providing claims security manager); and

f) a database broker that interfaces with the process engine and the database (Srinivasan: Fig. 1 {20 interacting or interfacing with 10 via 40}, col. 4, lines 26-33 and 36-38, wherein “network operating system” infers a program or module (broker) being used for facilitating communication between cited 20 and 10).

Claim 25. The workflow management system of claim 24, wherein the process engine allocates at least one activity to at least one participant and the Activities (Srinivasan: regarding “process engine”, see discussion of claim 1e) and col. 5, lines 23-50, wherein “project leader-col. 5, line 27” is a “participant” and “start date, description of task, duration or completion date relating to project-col. 5, lines 25-31” are activities and user would use said process engine employing reference’s “allocation-col. 5, line 44 read with 49” function for claimed purpose), comprise states of:

initial; waiting; dead; running; suspended; complete; terminated; error; and overdue (Inherent, since claimed functional elements are an essential requisite of a software program {process engine}).

Claim 26. The workflow management system of claim 24, wherein the scheduler manages a deadline of the activity and a wait activity (See discussion of claim 24d) above and user would use said scheduler for claimed limitations).

Claim 27. The workflow management system of claim 24, wherein the security manager further encodes and decodes information (Srinivasan: Col. 3, lines 33-38, wherein user would use reference's "security" function for claimed purpose).

Claim 28. The workflow management system of claim 25, wherein the activities transits among the states according to a business rule (Inherent, since all tasks or activities have to follow some conditions (business rules) and would change position (states) as they would be acted upon by the system).

Claim 29. The workflow management system of claim 25, wherein the process engine controls the workflow using a transition count in order to keep a consistency of the business process transit (See discussion of claim 1e) above and user would use reference's AMPS, Fig. 1 {20} for claimed purpose in accordance with above discussed business rules).

Claim 30. The workflow management system of claim 29, wherein the process engine sets to zero the transition counts of all the transitions that can be processed in a forward direction from the at least one activity, when the activity is started (As discussed above, user would use Srinivasan's AMPS to perform claimed limitation).

Claim 31. The workflow management system of claim 30, wherein the process engine further sets to one the transition counts of the transitions stemming from the activity, when the activity is completed (As discussed above, user would use Srinivasan's AMPS for claimed purpose).

Claim 32. A method for automating a business process, comprising steps of:
a) modeling the business process, the step of modeling including generating an organization chart (See discussion about modeling in Applicant's claim 1c) above and Srinivasan: Col. 1, lines 61-62, wherein user would employ cited "charting" function for creating or generating above discussed organization's structure in some format including chart);

b) designing the business process (See discussion of Applicant's claim 1c) above);

c) compiling the business process in a database (See discussion of Applicant's claim 1d) above); and

d) executing the business process (See discussion of Applicant's claim 1e) above); and

In the following element:

e) monitoring the business process.

Srinivasan does not explicitly teach above limitation.

However, Tatham et al teach the same (Col. 5, lines 50-51). Reference's system relates to a business activity or process (Col. 5, line 55), user would use cited "monitoring" function for checking (monitoring) said business activity (process)). As discussed above, while Srinivasan relates to a system which automates flow and control of procedures, information, applications etc. relating to a project for an organization and members thereof, Tatham et al provide a web-based system enabling collaborative functionality among a number or group of users.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the relevant art at the time of Applicant's invention to include Tatham et al's feature into Srinivasan's invention, thereby achieving a system with extended functionality and enhanced utility.

Claim 35. The method claim 32, wherein the step of designing a process further comprises:

identifying an activity to be executed (Srinivasan: Claim 1b), wherein "identifying" function would be used for claimed limitation); and

allocating a property to the activity (See discussion of "allocation" function in claim 25) above and user would employ said allocation function for claimed limitation).

Claim 36. The method of claim 35, wherein the activity comprises:
a start activity that starts a process; a normal activity that involves an intervention by a participant; a wait activity; a mail activity; an SQL activity that accesses an application database; a sub-process activity that comprises a plurality of separate activities; an agent activity that automatically activates a program; a connector activity; and an end activity that represents an end of the process (Inherent, since claimed functions or elements are an essential requisite of a program or process or activity).

Claim 37. The method of claim 35, wherein the property comprises:
a) a participant that describes an individual that executes the activity (Srinivasan: Col. 6, line 67, wherein user would use "assigning" function for claimed purpose);
b) an application (Srinivasan: Col. 1, lines 33-35);
c) a post-condition that determines when the activity is completed (Inherent, since some conditional function have to be programmed for ascertaining {determining} as to when a process (activity) would be considered done {completed});
d) a schedule that describes planning of the activity (Srinivasan: Col. 1, lines 51-53 and col. 7, lines 32-33);
e) a deadline (Srinivasan: Col. 3, lines 23-24);

f) a sub-process that describes a location and an option of the sub-process' activity (Inherent, since a software program inherently comprises steps {processes} and each process {step} would be a sub-step or subprocess) and the same details {describes} the requisite information including claimed option, location);

g) a parameter that defines a value necessary for executing a program in the agent activity (Srinivasan: Col. 3, lines 18-25, wherein "priorities", infer some kind of parameter used for claimed purpose);

h) a mail-to that determines the recipient of e-mail in the mail activity (Inherent, since it is requisite information in a mail or email procedure or application);

i) a mail content that represent the contents of e-mail in the mail activity (Inherent, since it is requisite information in a mail or email procedure or application);

j) a general information that shows the names and the descriptions of the activity (Srinivasan: Claim 2 read with col. 7, lines 24-25 and col. 3, lines 1-5);

k) a transition condition that represents conditions for an input transition and an output transition (Inherent; since, it is the basic function of any logical function or condition); and

l) an icon (Tatham et al: Fig. 1 {Site #1 through 7 being symbolic representation of sites for users 30, 40 etc.}, are indeed "icons" and see motivation in claim 1b) above).

Claim 38. The method of claim 35, wherein the participant can comprise one of or any combination of a user, a department and the role (Srinivasan: Abstract, lines 1-3, col. 4, lines 42-44, wherein "organization" infers comprising constituent entities

including department, division, section etc., and “work group” indicates users and “program managers, team leaders” etc. infer claimed “role”).

Claim 39. The method of claim 38, wherein the participant can be a manager of the participant (Srinivasan: Col. 3, lines 21-22, wherein “general or program manager” infer claimed authority or “manager”).

Claim 40. The method of claim 38, wherein the participant can be a peer of the participant (Srinivasan: Col. 7, line 2, wherein “task leaders” would be claimed entity {peer of participant}).

Claim 41. The method of claim 38, wherein the participant can be a department of the participant (Srinivasan: Abstract, line 3, wherein “organization” infers provision of some entity or entities such as claimed department).

Claim 42. The method of claim 38, wherein activity is allocated based on the workload of the participant (Inherent, since tasks or activities are assigned in accordance with working capabilities (workload) of workers (participants)).

Claim 43. The method of claim 32, wherein generating an organization chart comprises mapping departments, member names, member titles and member roles
(Inherent, since mapping is an essential step in database environment or at best it is so

well known and long practiced that at the time of applicant's invention, one of ordinary skill would inherently employ it, and a user would use the same for "listing association" or mapping Srinivasan's col. 1, lines 38-39, col. 5, lines 23-30", wherein "organization" inferring "department", "task leader's name" indicating "member names" "titles" and "roles").

5. Claims 2-7, 16-23 and 33-34 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Srinivasan (US Patent 5,548,506) in view of Tatham et al (US Patent 6,223,177 B1) and further in view of Workgroup automation tools for end users (Software Review) (Office IQ), hereinafter "Workgroup".

Claim 2. The workflow management system of claim 1, wherein the administrator further comprises:

b) a role/group manager that can create, delete and maintain a role and a user group (Srinivasan: Fig. 1 {60}, col. 6, line 64 through col. 7, line 3, wherein cited "program manager, project leader, tasks leaders" infer availability of claimed "role/group manager" and see discussion about create, delete etc. above);

c) an authority manager (Srinivasan: Fig. 1 {60} and col. 3, lines 21-22 and col. 7, line 28, wherein "general or group or systems" manager points to claimed "authority manager" that can create, delete and maintain authorities to access the business process and the application program and can allocate the authorities to the role, the group and a member of at least one of the department and the user group (Col. 7, lines

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22-25 and col. 1, lines 40-42, wherein user would use reference's "authorization" function would be used for claimed purpose and "organization", "work teams" indicating "department", "user group" and "project leader" pointing to "member" of said department or organization and his "role").

In the undernoted element:

a) an organization manager that can create, delete and maintain a department;

Srinivasan teaches:

an organization manager (Fig. 1 {60}, col. 4, line 43 recited with col. 3, lines 21-22, wherein program (general) manager functions as organization manager and "an organization (Col. 1, line 38) would encompass various entities, such as "department" which would be controlled (maintained) by said general (program) manager; yet

Srinivasan does not show the features below:

create, delete

However, Tatham et al teach the same (Col. 2, line 3 and col. 5, lines 39-40. Applicant will appreciate that user would use cited functions for claimed purpose). While Srinivasan relates to a system which automates flow and control of procedures, information, applications etc. relating to a project for an organization and members thereof, Tatham et al provide a web-based system enabling collaborative functionality among a number or group of users and Workgroup is a tool for automating workflow management system allowing coordination of collaborative projects and other activities to workgroups.

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It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the relevant art at the time of current invention to incorporate Tatham et al's feature into Srinivasan's invention, thereby providing a system with enhanced functionality and extended utility.

In the following element:

d) a folder manager that can create, delete and maintain a folder.

both Srinivasan and Tatham et al do not teach the above feature.

However, Workgroup teaches the same (Page 1, lines 5 and 24-26 read with page 2, lines 53-54, wherein citation of "documents, folders" infer availability of a "program" to manage various documents, folders etc. {folder manager}). As discussed above, While Srinivasan relates to a system which automates flow and control of procedures, information, applications etc. relating to a project for an organization and members thereof, Tatham et al provide a web-based system enabling collaborative functionality among a number or group of users and Workgroup is a tool for automating workflow management system allowing coordination of collaborative projects and other activities to workgroups.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the relevant art at the time of current invention to incorporate Workgroup's feature into the combination of Srinivasan and Tatham et al's invention, thereby providing a system with extended functionality and enhanced utility.

Claim 3. The workflow management system of claim 2, further comprising an object manager, wherein the object manager interfaces the administrator with the database (Workgroup: Page 2, lines 12-13, wherein "storage in object-oriented" format infers the availability of claimed "object manager" and since system provides "sharing information", coordinating activities" etc. and "networks", and user would use the same to provide claimed interface. See motivation in 2a) above).

Claim 4. The workflow management system of claim 3, wherein the database further comprises:

an organization database (Srinivasan: Fig. 1 {60} and reference's "project database" Fig. 2 {60}, the same would be used for claimed purpose);
authority database (Srinivasan: Fig. 2 {60} and Fig. 1 {60}, cited database 60 would be used as storing information about group managers, team leaders etc. which function as authority) and

a folder database (User would use Srinivasan's database, Fig 2 {60} as claimed one).

Claim 5. The workflow management system of claim 1, wherein the process designer comprises:

a) a graphic designer that can create and design an activity and a business process using a graphic interface (Workgroup: Page 2, lines 1-11 and see motivation in 2a) above); and

b) a property designer that can define an activity to be executed in the business process (Srinivasan: Fig. 3, col. 5, lines 23-39, wherein Fig. 3 entries clearly infer availability of a program that facilitate claimed defining, execution etc. and see motivation in 2a) above).

Claim 6. The workflow management system of claim 5, wherein the processor designer further comprises an object manager that interfaces the processor designer with the database (Inherent, since Srinivasan's various system components communicate with each other, user would use said communication interface for claimed purpose).

Claim 7. The workflow management system of claim 6, wherein the 43 database comprises:

a) a process definition folder that contains information related to the business process modeling (Inherent, since provision of a function for defining a process is a fundamental requisite of any program or system and said function is stored in a storage means {database} in some form or format including a file or folder etc.);

b) a data folder that contains data generated by the business process execution (Inherent, since provision of some partition in a database for storing data in some format (file or folder) is an essential requisite in database building); and

c) an organization folder (As discussed above).

Claim 16. The workflow management system of claim 2, wherein the 15 role/group manager can allocate the member to the role and the user group (See discussion of claim 2b) above and Srinivasan's col. 6, line 67 and col. 4, lines 15-16, wherein user would use reference's "assigning" function for claimed limitation).

Claim 17. The workflow management system of claim 2, wherein the authority manager can allocate the authorities to the role, the group and the member of the department and/or user group (See discussion of claims 2c and 16 above).

Claim 18. The workflow management system of claim 5, wherein the property designer can allocate the activity to a participant (See discussion of claims 5b and 16 above).

Claim 19. The workflow management system of claim 5, wherein the property designer can set up a business rule (See discussion of claims 5b and Srinivasan's col. 3, lines 21-25).

Claim 20. The workflow management system of claim 19, wherein the business rule includes terms, conditions and a transition path after completing the activity (Srinivasan: Col. 5, lines 21-25, wherein "priorities" for completion, "task deadlines" and "resource usage" infer claimed terms, conditions etc.).

Claim 21. The workflow management system of claim 5, wherein the process designer further comprises a check-out table (See discussion of claim 1c) and Srinivasan's Fig. 3, col. 5, lines 24-25, wherein user would use Fig. 3 file as claimed table).

Claim 22. The workflow management system of claim 21, wherein the check-out table contains information on a process model currently checked-out by a user (Srinivasan: Fig. 3, col. 5, lines 24-25, wherein Fig. 3 file would comprise the claimed feature).

Claim 23. The workflow management system of claim 22, wherein the system keep a currently checked-out process from being checked-out again by referring to the check-out table (As discussed above, user would employ Fig. 3 file as claimed checkout table which would be used for claimed limitation).

Claim 33. The method of claim 32, wherein the step of modeling the business process further comprises:

- a) mapping at least one of departments, members, member titles and member roles to generate the organization chart (See discussion of claim 43) above);
 - b) creating a role (See discussion of claim 2b) above); and
 - c) allocating an authority to the role (See discussion of claim 2c) above).
-

Claim 34. The method of claim 32, wherein the step of modeling the business process further comprises:

- a) mapping at least one of departments, members, member titles and member roles to generate the organization chart (See discussion of claim 43) above);
 - b) creating a group of human resources (See discussion of claim 33b) above);
- and
- c) allocating an authority to the group of human resources (See discussion of claim 33c) above).

Response to Arguments

6. Applicant's arguments filed August 01, 2003 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive and are responded below.

In the Remarks the Applicant argues that:

- a) Srinivasan and Tatham et al do not teach: **"automating"** a workflow management system or method.

In this regard Applicant is directed to the following case law:

- 1) In response to applicant's arguments, the recitation **"automating"** has not been given patentable weight because the recitation occurs in the preamble. A preamble is generally not accorded any patentable weight where it merely recites the purpose of a process or the intended use of a structure, and where the body of the claim does not depend on the preamble for completeness but, instead, the process steps or structural limitations are able to stand alone. See *In re Hirao*, 535 F.2d 67, 190

USPQ 15 (CCPA 1976) and *Kropa v. Robie*, 187 F.2d 150, 152, 88 USPQ 478, 481 (CCPA 1951).

2) All references teach “automating” flow of working procedures, information and applications relating to management of project, mutual collaborative activities etc., for instance, Srinivasan: Abstract, lines 1-4, wherein “designing and implementation of Auto Multi-project Server System” providing “automation of tasks of project management coordination for work-group team members” clearly infers that the reference system provides “a process of performing and controlling (managing the flow or workflow of) tasks” to be performed by the team members (work-group) of an organization, and wherein “organizational” infers that reference is concerned with a process relating to a business organization as indicated by Fig. 3 {A: Resource name> Feet of copper pipes, Resource budget>2000 and Resource consumed>500, B: Resource name>Plumber man hours, Resource budget>10 and Resource consumed> etc., wherein citation of feet copper pipes, budget and resource consumed etc. pointing to that the project and steps thereof or workflow relating to a business dealing with installation of pipes. Moreover, it is noted that Srinivasan project system being generic, is for use by any entity including business);

Tatham et al: Col. 3, lines 58-66 {Once again primary user 30 and secondary user 40 require no specialized software except a browser and sites #1, 2, 3 in server 10, Fig. 1, are automatically accessible to users 30 and 40, and col. 5, lines 46-48, wherein “all administrative details of the workgroup activities are automatically provided in administrative subsystem {inferring a computerized facility} which controls the day to

day management of the system", and col. 6, lines 9-11 recited with lines 53-57 clearly point to system's dealing with project management; and

Workgroup provides workgroup automation tools including Office I.Q. which is a workflow management package facilitating group users means to define and control automated workflow relating to collaborative projects and other activities (page 1, lines 15-21).

Applicant being highly knowledgeable in the computer arts, would know that a function, procedure or process is considered "automated", when it is computerized.

b) Tatham et al disclose administration screen, and does not teach:

"administrator that prepares for automating the business process.

In regard to above, applicant is referred to Tatham et al's col. 5, lines 46-48 and Fig. 3e, which read as "all the administrative details of the workgroup activity are **automatically** fed into the administrative subsystem", wherein "entering details of activities automatically" inferring that reference system is capable of performing functions automatically, such as "processing". Recitation: Administrator accessing all aspects of the system via administration screen of Fig. 3, col. 7, lines 53-54 clearly indicating the existence of "an administrator" and accessing "all aspects of the system" indicating said administrator's accessing would entail performing some functions including readying or preparing the system for automating the process or business process. Cited "the administrative subsystem" indicates that said system is a computerized function which would provide automated functionality, and using the template entries of Fig. 3e, the administrator subsystem in fact develops (box: Define broadcast) or prepares for

automatic performance of above discussed process (box: Send broadcast) and said process relates to broadcast business.

c) There is no motivation other than impermissible hindsight to combine the teachings of Srinivasan and Tatham et al.

In this respect, Applicant is referred to the following case law;

In response to applicant's argument that the examiner's conclusion of obviousness is based upon improper hindsight reasoning, it must be recognized that any judgment on obviousness is in a sense necessarily a reconstruction based upon hindsight reasoning. But so long as it takes into account only knowledge which was within the level of ordinary skill at the time the claimed invention was made, and does not include knowledge gleaned only from the applicant's disclosure, such a reconstruction is proper. See *In re McLaughlin*, 443 F.2d 1392, 170 USPQ 209 (CCPA 1971).

d) One of ordinary skill would not have been motivated to combine teachings of Srinivasan and Tatham et al.

In this respect, Applicant may appreciably realize that Srinivasan teaches automated project workflow management and Tatham et al teach web-based system providing collaborative functionality among a number or group of users and one of ordinary skill in the computerized business arts at the time of Applicant's invention would have been motivated to combine cited references, because the combination would provide a system enabling the various system users to work together from different locations, like offices, organizations or departments thereof, even countries etc., using a computer platform independent single source for requisite data, tools including software functions,

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procedures etc., which, as stated in the Office Actions, is unequivocally an enhanced functionality and extended utility


f) Similar reasoning holds for argument relating to other claims.


In the light of above discussed facts, it is stated that Applicant's arguments have been fully considered, deemed unpersuasive and prior art rejection is maintained.

7. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to M. Irshadullah whose telephone number is 703-308-6683. The examiner can normally be reached on 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m..

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Tariq Hafiz can be reached on 703-305-9643. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are 703-872-9326 and for after Final 703-872-9327.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


M. Irshadullah
May 19, 2004


TARIQ R. HAFIZ
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 26